

Northwest Cluster

Northwest High School

Kingsview Middle School

Lakelands Park Middle School (shared)

Roberto Clemente Middle School (shared)

Clopper Mill Elementary School

Darnestown Elementary School

Diamond Elementary School

Germantown Elementary School

Great Seneca Creek Elementary School

Ronald McNair Elementary School

Spark M. Matsunaga Elementary School

FY 2009-2014 CIP Testimony

to the Board of Education

November 13, 2008

Good evening Dr. Weast, President Navarro, Board Members. My name is Susan Burkinshaw and I am one of the Northwest Cluster Co-Coordinators.

We understand that we are in a very tight fiscal climate, but we want to reiterate the message that we can't afford to fall behind. As such, we support the recommendations for this 2009-2014 CIP.

The Northwest Cluster has several schools that are mentioned in the plan, all of which need to be addressed as recommended.

In particular, I want to remind you about the conditions at Darnestown Elementary after we toured the school last year. This school is one of the smallest elementary schools in the county and one of the oldest in our Cluster. Although the Darnestown ES facility only houses about 385 students, it has six portable classrooms and exceeds its core capacity by OVER 41%.

As we testified last year, Darnestown Elementary School was built in 1954 and has not been updated in over 27 years. This building is in desperate need of not only additional space, but also renovation—

- ⇒ Buckets hanging from the ceiling last year in the computer lab to catch drips that interrupted MAP-R testing;
- ⇒ All available spaces, including those both with and without ventilation or central heating and air have been converted to classroom spaces, including all storage closets and the stage;

**Northwest Cluster Testimony
November 13, 2008 (cont'd)**

- ⇒ Wind blowing through windows in the media center allowing hot and cold air in and air conditioned and heated air out;
- ⇒ It was determined last year that the school's aging septic system had been chronically strained by an almost 150% capacity load—it is now scheduled for replacement in conjunction with the installation of low-flow toilets early next year with emergency funding.

Although county-wide aggregate numbers are close to right-on again this year, our upcounty clusters are still feeling the pinch of overcrowding in brand new schools due to inaccurate enrollment projections. As such, older schools in our Cluster have not all been relieved of overcrowding with the addition of newer schools.

We are concerned as parents and as taxpayers that, particularly in our current fiscal climate, changes made to facilities should be done in a financially and environmentally responsible way. Band-aid solutions that will need to be redone in the near future and don't increase efficiencies should be reconsidered.

One bright spot in our cluster, as reported recently in USA Today, on News Channel 8, and in the Gazette, Great Seneca Creek Elementary School has seen a tremendous cost savings with its "green" design—it currently uses the least energy of any building owned by MCPS, and uses only 35,000 BTUs per square foot per year vs. the average MCPS facility at 60,000 BTUs per square foot per year. GSCES costs about 18% less to operate per year than an average non-green school, with a combined water and energy savings of about \$27,000 annually over a comparably sized facility.

This is proof that if repairs and renovations are done responsibly, we can actually see returns on the investments that will help pay it forward for other facilities.

Thank you for your consideration and for all you do for our kids.

*Respectfully submitted by:
Susan Burkinshaw and Bob Murphy, 2007-8 Northwest Cluster Co-Coordinators*